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THE "TITANIC" DISASTER

SPEECH OF
HON. WILLIAM ALDEN SMITH
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 28, 1912



PRESENTED BY MR. CURTIS FOR MR. GUGGENHEIM

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Hon. WILLIAM ALDEN SMITH, of Michigan, said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: My associates and myself return the commission handed to us on the 18th day of April last, directing an immediate inquiry into "the causes leading up to the destruction of the steamship *Titanic*, with its attendant and unparalleled loss of life, so shocking to the people of the world." Mindful of the responsibility of our office, we desire the Senate to know that in the execution of its command we have been guided solely by the public interest and a desire to meet the expectations of our associates without bias, prejudice, sensationalism, or slander of the living or dead. That duty, we believe, would be best performed by an exact ascertainment of the true state of affairs.

Our course was simple and plain—to gather the facts relating to this disaster while they were still vivid realities. Questions of diverse citizenship gave way to the universal desire for the simple truth. It was of paramount importance that we should act quickly to avoid jurisdictional confusion and organized opposition at home or abroad. We, of course, recognized that the ship was under a foreign flag; but the lives of many of our own countrymen had been sacrificed and the safety of many had been put in grave peril, and it was vital that the entire matter should be reviewed before an American tribunal if legislative action was to be taken for future guidance. Therefore, we determined that the testimony of British officers and crew and English passengers temporarily in the United States should be first obtained. We deemed it important to have the surviving officers and sailors of this ship meet the passengers of all classes before our

committee. Without any pretension to experience or special knowledge of nautical affairs, nevertheless I am of the opinion that very few important facts which were susceptible of being known escaped our scrutiny. Energy is often more desirable than learning, and the inquisition serves a useful purpose to the State.

We went to the side of the hospital ship with purpose and pity and saw the almost lifeless survivors in their garments of woe—joy and sorrow so intermingled that it was difficult to discern light from shadow, and the sad scene was only varied by the cry of reunited loved ones whose mutual grief was written in the language of creation.

At 10 o'clock on that fateful Sunday evening this latest maritime creation was cutting its first pathway through the North Atlantic Ocean with scarcely a ripple to retard its progress.

From the builders' hands she was plunged straightway to her fate, and christening salvos

acclaimed at once her birth and death. Builders of renown had launched her on the billows with confident assurance of her strength, while every port rang with praise for their achievement; shipbuilding to them was both a science and a religion; parent ships and sister ships had easily withstood the waves, while the mark of their hammer was all that was needed to give assurance of the high quality of the work. In the construction of the *Titanic* no limit of cost circumscribed their endeavor, and when this vessel took its place at the head of the line every modern improvement in shipbuilding was supposed to have been realized; so confident were they that both owner and builder were eager to go upon the trial trip; no sufficient tests were made of boilers or bulkheads or gearing or equipment, and no life-saving or signal devices were reviewed; officers and crew were strangers to one another and passengers to both; neither was familiar with the vessel or its im-

plements or tools; no drill or station practice or helpful discipline disturbed the tranquillity of that voyage, and when the crisis came a state of absolute unpreparedness stupefied both passengers and crew and, in their despair, the ship went down, carrying as needless a sacrifice of noble women and brave men as ever clustered about the Judgment Seat in any single moment of passing time.

We shall leave to the honest judgment of England its painstaking chastisement of the British Board of Trade, to whose laxity of regulation and hasty inspection the world is largely indebted for this awful fatality. Of contributing causes there were very many. In the face of warning signals, speed was increased and messages of danger seemed to stimulate her to action rather than to persuade her to fear.

At noon on that fatal Sunday the steamship *Baltic* warned her of ice within 5 miles of

her track and near the place where the accident occurred; at 5 o'clock in the afternoon and again, an hour before the accident, when but a few miles away, the steamship *Californian* signaled the *Titanic* to beware of danger, which her operator curtly acknowledged; the same evening the *Titanic* transmitted to the Hydrographic Office in Washington a message from the steamship *Amerika*, saying she had passed "two large icebergs" near the track of the ill-fated ship. In the face of these warnings, each revolution of her engines marked at the moment of the collision her highest speed of $24\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour.

The *Titanic* rushed onward on her true course—one recognized as appropriate and agreed upon by mariners as the international highway for westbound vessels, yet dangerous at this season of the year, when the Labrador current may be bearing vast masses of ice across the track of ships—scores of these tow-

ering glaciers planted themselves in the very pathway of this ship and were so large and so numerous that, in the absence of fog, they should have been easily discernible by the lookout, who says in his testimony that if he had been supplied with glasses, such as he had been accustomed to on the *Oceanic* and on this vessel, between Belfast and Southampton, but which were denied him by Second Officer Lightoller between Southampton and the place of this accident, he could have seen the iceberg with which this ship collided, "soon enough to get out of the way." One of these icebergs was nearly 200 feet above the level of the sea, with seven-eighths of its ponderous bulk hidden beneath the surface. They are composed of ice and earth and rock, and old sailors of the coast of Newfoundland usually give them a wide berth. Land has been formed by these deposits, and icebergs have frequently grounded in 20 fathoms of

water with protruding spires more than a hundred feet in height. As they go southward their journey is slow and erratic, and the influence of spring often causes explosions in the ice, which frequently serve to warn sailors of danger; sometimes the drift of field ice, led by a great berg, has been known to convoy schooners in a calm, while shipwrecked sailors have drifted hundreds of miles in safety upon the irregular surface of the ice. Skillful seamanship finds little difficulty in avoiding these obstacles, and those most familiar with the North Atlantic are usually alert at this season of the year to avoid unnecessary peril.

Captain Smith knew the sea and his clear eye and steady hand had often guided his ship through dangerous paths. For 40 years storms sought in vain to vex him or menace his craft. But once before in all his honorable career was his pride humbled or his vessel maimed. Each new advancing type of ship built by his com-

pany was handed over to him as a reward for faithful services and as an evidence of confidence in his skill. Strong of limb, intent of purpose, pure in character, dauntless as a sailor should be, he walked the deck of his majestic structure as master of her keel.

Titanic though she was, his indifference to danger was one of the direct and contributing causes of this unnecessary tragedy, while his own willingness to die was the expiating evidence of his fitness to live. Those of us who knew him well—not in anger, but in sorrow—file one specific charge against him, overconfidence and neglect to heed the oft-repeated warnings of his friends; but, in his horrible dismay, when his brain was afire with honest retribution, we can still see, in his manly bearing and his tender solicitude for the safety of women and little children, some traces of his lofty spirit when dark clouds lowered all about him and angry

elements stripped him of his command. His devotion to his craft, even as it writhed and twisted and struggled for mastery over its foe, calmed the fears of many of the stricken multitude who hung upon his words, lending dignity to a parting scene as inspiring as it is beautiful to remember.

The mystery of his indifference to danger, when other and less pretentious vessels doubled their lookout or stopped their engines finds no reasonable hypothesis in conjecture or speculation; science in shipbuilding was supposed to have attained perfection and to have spoken her last word; mastery of the ocean had at last been achieved; but overconfidence seems to have dulled the faculties usually so alert. With the atmosphere literally charged with warning signals and wireless messages registering their last appeal, the stokers in the engine room fed their fires with fresh fuel, registering in that dangerous place her fastest speed.

President Ismay testified: "My recollection is that between Southampton and Cherbourg we ran at 60 revolutions, from Cherbourg to Queenstown at 70 revolutions, and when we left Queenstown we were running at 72 revolutions, and I believe that the ship was worked up to 75 revolutions (or about) 22 knots per hour, but I really have no accurate knowledge of that." And he again said, when asked if she was running at her maximum speed at the time she was making 75 revolutions: "No, sir; my understanding is, or I am told, that the engines were balanced and would run their best at 78 revolutions."

At 12.55 Sunday afternoon, answering the warning of Captain Ranson, of the steamship *Baltic*, at whose christening he had taken such a proud part, and on whose bridge he had so often braved the perils of the Atlantic, Captain Smith only replied, "Thanks for your message and good wishes. Had fine weather

since leaving." The soft warmth from the Gulf Stream, through which they had passed during the day, gave way at night to chill and cold; the air and water registered their lowest point an hour before the collision. The warnings of shipmasters fell upon deaf ears and officers and crew seemed to have regarded the paper bulletins of danger with absolute indifference and, as if to stir their laggard spirits, Nature gave a warning of approaching peril so significant that passengers in state-room and steerage shut out the chill and spoke to one another of the sudden cold. Sailors off the Grand Banks know the importance of the thermometer, which is almost as necessary to their safety as is the compass. Even the quartermaster, Hichens, who regularly took the temperature of the water from the sea, says, "It suddenly became bitter cold," and added that the first order received by him from Second Officer Lightoller at 8 o'clock

Sunday evening was "to take his compliments down to the ship's carpenter and inform him to look to his fresh water; that it was about to freeze," and he says he was also directed by the same officer to find the deck engineer and bring him the key to open the heaters in the corridor and officers' quarters, wheelhouse, and chart room on account of the intense cold. He also said he took the temperature of the air and water just before he went to the wheel, at 8 o'clock, and that the bucket, with which he dipped the water to make the tests "was a small paint tin," an old one, only improvised for the occasion; that the new one, a long piece of leather, leaded, was not furnished him; while Mrs. Walter Douglas, of Minneapolis, asserts under oath that both she and her husband saw the quartermaster Saturday afternoon attempt to reach the water with this bucket and says that he was unable to do so and that both she and Mr. Douglas

saw him fill the bucket from a hydrant on the deck and take that water to be tested.

Hichens then said:

“At 10 o'clock I went to the wheel. * * * All went along very well until 20 minutes to 12, when three gongs came from the lookout, and immediately afterwards a report on the telephone, 'Iceberg right ahead.' The chief officer rushed from the wing to the bridge. * * * He rushed to the engines. I heard the telegraph bell ring; also give the order, 'Hard astarboard.' Repeated the order, 'Hard astarboard. The helm is hard over, sir.' * * * The captain * * * came back to the wheelhouse and looked at the commutator (clinometer) in front of the compass, which is a little instrument like a clock to tell you how the ship is listing. The ship had a list of 5° to the starboard * * * about 5 to 10 minutes after the impact.”

At that moment the ice, resistless as steel, stole upon her and struck her in a vital spot,

while the last command of the officer of the watch in his effort to avert disaster, distracted by the sudden appearance of extreme danger, sharply turned aside the prow, the part best prepared to resist collision, exposing the temple to the blow; at the turn of the bilge the steel encasement yielded to a glancing blow so slight that the impact was not felt in many parts of the ship, although representing an energy of more than a million foot tons, said to be the equivalent of the combined broadsides of 20 of the largest guns in our battleship fleet fired at the same moment, with a blow so deadly many of the passengers and crew did not even know of the collision until tardily advised of the danger by anxious friends, and even then official statements were clothed in such confident assurances of safety as to arouse no fear. The awful force of the impact was well known to the master and builder, who, from the first, must have known

the ship was doomed, and never uttered an encouraging sign to one another, while to the inquiry of President Ismay as to whether it was serious, the captain only replied, "I think it is." There is evidence tending to show that even the water-tight compartments were not successfully closed either above or below. No general alarm was given, no ship's officers formally assembled, no orderly routine was attempted, or organized system of safety begun. Haphazard, they rushed by one another, on staircase and in hallway, while men of self-control gathered here and there about the decks, helplessly staring at one another or giving encouragement to those less courageous than themselves.

Life belts were finally adjusted to all and the lifeboats were cleared away, and although strangely insufficient in number, were only partially loaded and in all instances unprovided with compasses and only three of them

had lamps. They were manned so badly that, in the absence of prompt relief, they would have fallen easy victims to the advancing ice floe, nearly 30 miles in width and rising 16 feet above the surface of the water. Their danger would have been as great as if they had remained on the deck of the broken hull, and if the sea had risen these toy targets with over 700 exhausted people would have been helplessly tossed about upon the waves without food or water. One witness swore that two of the three stewards in her boat admitted that they had never had an oar in their hands before and did not even know what the oarlock was for. The lifeboats were filled so indifferently and lowered so quickly that, according to the uncontradicted evidence, nearly 500 people were needlessly sacrificed to want of orderly discipline in loading the few that were provided. There were 1,324 passengers on the ship. The

lifeboats would have easily cared for 1,176 and only contained 704, 12 of whom were taken into the boats from the water, while the weather conditions were favorable and the sea perfectly calm. And yet it is said by some well-meaning persons that the best of discipline prevailed. If this is discipline, what would have been disorder?

Among the passengers were many strong men who had been accustomed to command, whose lives had marked every avenue of endeavor, and whose business experience and military training especially fitted them for such an emergency. These were rudely silenced and forbidden to speak, as was the president of this company, by junior officers, a few of whom, I regret to say, availed themselves of the first opportunity to leave the ship. Some of the men, to whom had been intrusted the care of passengers, never reported to their official stations, and quickly deserted the ship.

with a recklessness and indifference to the responsibilities of their positions as culpable and amazing as it is impossible to believe. And some of these men say that they "laid by" in their partially filled lifeboats and listened to the cries of distress "until the noise quited down" and surveyed from a safe distance the unselfish men and women and faithful fellow officers and seamen, whose heroism lightens up this tragedy and recalls the noblest traditions of the sea.

Some things are dearer than life itself, and the refusal of Phillips and Bride, wireless operators, to desert their posts of duty, even after the water had mounted to the upper deck, because the captain had not given them permission to leave, is an example of faithfulness worthy of the highest praise, while the final exit of the Phillips boy from the ship and from the world was not so swift as to prevent him from pausing long enough to pass a cup

of water to a fainting woman, who fell from her husband's arm into the operator's chair, as he was tardily fleeing from his wireless apparatus, where he had ticked off the last message from his ship and from his brain.

Even the electric signal of distress was only sent upon its unseen search for help after a delay of nearly 20 minutes, and its spark was arrested by an accident so providential as to excite wonder. In five minutes more the ill-paid operator on the *Carpathia*, who snatched this secret from the air, would have forgotten his perplexities in slumber, and no note would have been taken of the awful importance of the passing hour. Partially undressed, he had left the telephone receiver upon his head, and through it heard the call for help. On the instant the ship's course was changed and the captain replied, "We are coming to your relief." The elements of nature have chosen darkness as the most

helpful medium of radio communication, and operators should be at their posts at that time of the voyage, ready to catch every unfavorable sign and to apprise officers and crew of dangers besetting the ship. Neither timber nor iron nor steel are impervious to its secrets; in its limitless quest no barrier seems insurmountable, and distance is annihilated as by the lightning's flash; schoolboys toy with its mysteries and catch its lessons from the house-tops. Marconi, genius and gentleman, sitting in his office in the capital of the Argentine Republic, read, as in an open book, a wireless message direct from the coast of Ireland. When the world weeps together over a common loss, when nature moves in the same direction in all spheres, why should not the nations clear the sea of its conflicting idioms and wisely regulate this new servant of humanity? To that end wages must be increased in proportion to the responsibility

assumed, and service, to be useful, must be made continuous, night and day, while this new profession must rid itself of the spirit of venality, to which, in my opinion, the world is indebted for a systematic reign of silence concerning the details of this disaster, so apparent as to excite international concern, and should be discouraged.

It is no excuse that the apparatus on the *Carpathia* was antiquated; it easily caught the signal of distress and spoke with other ships nearly 200 miles away, both before and after the accident, while the operator says it was good for 250 miles. The steamship *Californian* was within easy reach of this ship for nearly four hours after all the facts were known to Operator Cottam. The captain of the *Carpathia* says he gave explicit directions that all official messages should be immediately sent through other ships, and messages of passengers should be given prefer-

ence. According to Binns, the inspector, the apparatus on the *Californian* was practically new and easily tuned to carry every detail of that calamity to the coast stations at Cape Sable and Cape Race, and should have done so. The course taken was singularly in accord with the reticence of the officials of the White Star Co., who knew at 2.30 Monday morning, through the steamship *Virginian* and their office in Montreal, what was supposed to have occurred, and, according to their own admission, the information then given and which they battled against during all of that day, contained absolutely the entire story, and yet, at 7.51 Monday evening, a message from their own office, officially signed, containing the positive assurance of the safety of the passengers, was sent to a half-crazed father at Huntington, W. Va., nearly two hours after their admitted familiarity with the details of the disaster. It is little wonder that

we have not been able to fix with definiteness the author of this falsehood.

It is not a pleasant duty to criticize the conduct or comment upon the shortcomings of others, but the plain truth should be told. Captain Lord, of the steamship *Californian*, sailing from London to Boston, who stopped his ship in the same vicinity where the *Titanic* is supposed to have met with the accident, passed two large icebergs at 6.30 p. m. Sunday evening, April 14; at 7.15 he "passed one large iceberg and two more in sight to the southward." Because of ice he stopped his ship for the night in latitude $42^{\circ} 5'$ N., longitude $50^{\circ} 7'$ W., and at 10.50 ship's time (9.10 New York time) he sent a wireless message to the *Titanic*, telling them he was "stopped and surrounded by ice." The *Titanic* operator brusquely replied to "shut up," that he was "busy." Captain Lord stated that "from the position we stopped in to the

position in which the *Titanic* is supposed to have hit the iceberg was $19\frac{1}{2}$ miles," and the course south, 16 west, and he says this was the last communication he had with the *Titanic*. He also says, "We doubled the lookout from the crew, put a man on the forecastle head—that is, right at the bow of the ship—and I was on the bridge myself with an officer" until half past 10, "which I would not have been under ordinary conditions." He thus admits extraordinary conditions, and that he received reports of icebergs, growlers, and field ice 42° north from $40^{\circ} 51'$ west from Captain Barr, of the steamship *Coronian*, the day before, and also from the steamship *Parisian* on that Sunday, while the steamship *New Amsterdam* reported to him several days before that they had seen field ice "extending as far to the northeast as horizon is visible."

He also admits that the morning after this accident he "was practically surrounded by

icebergs, the largest from 100 to 150 feet high and from 700 to 800 feet in width above the water." He admits that the officer on watch on the steamship *Californian* saw some signals and that when he (the captain) came off the bridge at half past 10 he said: "I pointed out to the officer that I thought I saw a light coming along, and it was a most peculiar light." He also said that he went below and told the engineer to keep the steam ready, saying that he saw these signals, and then said: "There is a steamer coming. Let us go to the wireless and see what the news is." He says he "met the operator coming" and said: "Do you know anything?" The operator replied: "The *Titanic*." And the captain said: "I gave him instructions to let the *Titanic* know," which he did, and found that it was the *Titanic*, although the captain said: "This is not the *Titanic*; there is no doubt about it." He then says: "She came

and lay, at half past 11, alongside of us until, I suppose, a quarter past 1, within 4 miles of us. We could see everything on her quite distinctly; see her lights. We signaled her at half past 11, with the Morse lamp. She did not take the slightest notice of it. That was between half past 11 and 20 minutes to 12. We signaled her again at 10 minutes past 12, half past 12, a quarter to 1, and 1 o'clock with a very powerful Morse lamp, which you can see about 10 miles."

He further says that "when the second officer came on the bridge at 12 o'clock, or 10 minutes past 12, I told him to watch that steamer which was stopped. I pointed out the ice to him; told him we were surrounded by ice; to watch the steamer, that she did not get any closer to her. At 20 minutes to 1 I whistled up the speaking tube and asked if she was getting any nearer. He said, 'No; she is not taking any notice of us;' so I said, 'I

will go and lie down a bit.' At a quarter past 1 he said, 'I think she has fired a rocket,' and, continuing, 'She did not answer the Morse lamp, and she has commenced to go away from us.' I then said, 'Call her up and let me know at once what her name is.' So he put the whistle back, and, apparently, he was calling. Then I went to sleep." Captain Lord then says, "Rockets are used as signals of distress and can not be mistaken." He does not believe that he could have seen the *Titanic* Morse signals, but is not quite so doubtful about being unable to see rockets that distance.

Most of the witnesses of the ill-fated vessel before the committee saw plainly the light, which Captain Lord says was displayed for nearly two hours after the accident, while the captain and some of the officers of the *Titanic* directed the lifeboats to pull for that light and return with the empty boats to the side of the ship.

Ernest Gill, a member of the crew of the *Californian*, says that he came on deck from the engine room at 11.56, ship's time, and just before the accident that fatal Sunday evening, and saw plainly over the rail on the starboard side "the lights of a very large steamer about 10 miles away," and that he "could see her port side lights;" that he then went to his cabin and said to his mate, William Thomas, that it was "clear off to the starboard, for I saw a big vessel going along at full speed;" that he could not sleep and went on deck again and "saw a white rocket about 10 miles away on the starboard side and in seven or eight minutes saw distinctly a second rocket in the same place," saying to himself "that must be a vessel in distress."

Why did the *Californian* display its Morse signal lamp from the moment of the collision continuously for nearly two hours if they saw nothing? And the signals which were visible

to Mr. Gill at 12.30 and afterwards, and which were also seen by the captain and officer of the watch, should have excited more solicitude than was displayed by the officers of that vessel, and the failure of Captain Lord to arouse the wireless operator on his ship, who could have easily ascertained the name of the vessel in distress and reached her in time to avert loss of life, places a tremendous responsibility upon this officer from which it will be very difficult for him to escape. Had he been as vigilant in the movement of his vessel as he was active in displaying his own signal lamp, there is a very strong probability that every human life that was sacrificed through this disaster could have been saved. The dictates of humanity should have prompted vigilance under such conditions, and the law of Great Britain giving effect to article 2 of the Brussels Convention in regard to assistance and salvage at sea, is as follows:

“The master or person in charge of a vessel shall, so far as he can do so without serious danger to his own vessel, her crew, and passengers (if any), render assistance to every person, even if such person be a subject of a foreign State at war with His Majesty, who is found at sea in danger of being lost, and if he fails to do so he shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.”

The Senate passed, on the 18th day of April last, a bill giving effect to the same treaty, which clearly indicates the disposition of the Government of England, and our own as well, in matters of this character. Contrast, if you will, the conduct of the captain of the *Carpathia* in this emergency and imagine what must be the consolation of that thoughtful and sympathetic mariner, who rescued the shipwrecked and left the people of the world his debtor as his ship sailed for distant seas a few days ago. By his utter self-effacement and his own indifference to

peril, by his promptness and his knightly sympathy, he rendered a great service to humanity. He should be made to realize the debt of gratitude this Nation owes to him, while the book of good deeds, which had so often been familiar with his unaffected valor, should henceforth carry the name of Captain Rostron to the remotest period of time. With most touching detail he promptly ordered the ship's officers to their stations, distributed the doctors into positions of greatest usefulness, prepared comforts for man and mother and babe; with foresight and tenderness he lifted them from their watery imprisonment and, when the rescue had been completed, summoned all of the rescued together and ordered the ship's bell tolled for the lost, and asked that prayers of thankfulness be offered by those who had been spared. It falls to the lot of few men to perform a service so unselfish, and the American Congress can honor itself no more by any single act

than by writing into its laws the gratitude we feel toward this modest and kindly man. The lessons of this hour are, indeed, fruitless and its precepts ill conceived if rules of action do not follow hard upon the day of reckoning. Obsolete and antiquated shipping laws should no longer encumber the parliamentary records of any Government, and overripe administrative boards should be pruned of dead branches and less sterile precepts taught and applied.

Upon the bosom of the sea the nations have for ages commingled together, arts and manufactures have been exchanged freely, and the knowledge of language spread to the remotest limit of civilization. The sea, once a torment to primitive man, has long since given way to his intelligent mastery, and in its changing moods there is real glamour; there the daring spirit of the explorer and trader still lingers in this period of sharpest rivalry; there prizes await the fleetest skipper.

The very presence of the owner and builder unconsciously stimulates endeavor, and the restraint of organized society is absolutely necessary to safety. As men have re-formed anew the natural banks of the ocean and struck the shackles from its contracted bounds, dedicating its bays and shores to commerce, so must we do our utmost to overcome its perils.

Piracy and pillage are twin trophies of international concern and, under the same searching scrutiny, modern shipping should be free from every inherent defect.

The calamity through which we have just passed has left traces of sorrow everywhere; hearts have been broken and deep anguish unexpressed; art will tipify with master hand its lavish contribution to the sea; soldiers of state and masters of trade will receive the homage which is their honest due; hills will be cleft in search of marble white enough to symbol-

ize these heroic deeds and, where kinship is the only tie that binds the lowly to the humble home bereft of son or mother or father, little groups of kinsfolk will recount, around the kitchen fire, the traits of human sympathy in those who went down with the ship. These are choice pictures in the treasure house of the affections, but even these will some time fade; the sea is the place permanently to honor our dead; this should be the occasion for a new birth of vigilance, and future generations must accord to this event a crowning motive for better things.

Recently we have witnessed a marked concentration of control of ocean transportation. Three companies—the International Mercantile Marine Co., the Hamburg-American Co., and the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.—control 604 ocean steamers with a gross tonnage of 3,632,233 tons. These companies control more tonnage than the total American

tonnage of all classes on the Great Lakes—2,943,523 tons. Any one of these companies controls tonnage nine times as great as the over-sea steam tonnage of the United States, and twice as great as the total registered steam tonnage of the merchant marine of the United States.

Regulation of steamship transportation is as necessary as regulation of railroad transportation, and less difficult to obtain. Transportation by rail is conducted through settled localities, where many residents would quickly discover and immediately report any irregularities or disregard of safety requirements, while by water it is conducted beyond the criticism of any except the actual passengers on the ship, making it all the more necessary for definite regulations.

Lanes of travel must be more carefully defined, strength of bow more positive and water-tight subdivision to limit submergence,

life-saving equipment better and numerous enough for all, discipline and practice a rudimentary exaction, eye more keen and ear alert to catch the warning cry, as on British battleships as well as on our own, powerful lights should be provided for merchant vessels to search out the partially submerged derelict; buoys should be carried by every ship to mark temporarily the place of the ship's burial in case of accident; and men of strength and spirit there must be, won back to a calling already demoralized and decadent. But 10 per cent of the men before the mast in our merchant marine are natives or naturalized Americans; even England, that 20 years ago had barely 7,000 Orientals on her merchant ships, now carries over 70,000 of that alien race. Americans must reenlist in this service, they must become the soldiers of the sea, and, whether on lookout, on deck, or at the wheel, whether able or common seamen, they should

be better paid for their labor and more highly honored in their calling; their rights must be respected, and their work carefully performed; harsh and severe restraining statutes must be repealed, and a new dignity given this important field of labor.

In our imagination we can see again the proud ship instinct with life and energy, with active figures again swarming upon its decks; musicians, teachers, artists, and authors; soldiers and sailors and men of large affairs; brave men and noble women of every land. We can see the unpretentious and the lowly, progenitors of the great and strong, turning their back upon the Old World, where endurance is to them no longer a virtue, and looking hopefully to the new. At the very moment of their greatest joy the ship suddenly reels, mutilated and groaning. With splendid courage the musicians fill the last moments with sympathetic melody. The ship wearily gives up

the unequal battle. Only a vestige remains of the men and women that but a moment before quickened her spacious apartments with human hopes and passions, sorrows, and joys. Upon that broken hull new vows were taken, new fealty expressed, old love renewed, and those who had been devoted in friendship and companions in life went proudly and defiantly on the last life pilgrimage together. In such a heritage we must feel ourselves more intimately related to the sea than ever before, and henceforth it will send back to us on its rising tide the cheering salutations from those we have lost.



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